

VZCZCXRO4659  
PP RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHBUL #5843/01 3480324  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 140324Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4879  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3395  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 005843

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CR, S/CT, SCA/PAB, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN  
OSD FOR KIMMETT  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, AND POLAD  
RELEASABLE TO NATO/ISAF/AUS/NZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/PANSHJIR: WOMEN'S AGENDA ADVANCING, DESPITE  
WEAK AIDE

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY A/POL COUNSELOR MARTIN D. MURPHY FOR REASO  
NS 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The PRT is working to create opportunities for the women of Panjshir to improve their levels of education, as well as their economic mobility and access to health care. A weak Director of Women's Affairs, however, represents a major stumbling block. The PRT strategy has been to work around the incumbent, while not undermining the office. The Governor has taken the same tack. For the longer term, he seeks her replacement. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In A November 28 meeting at Bagram Airfield with representatives of CJTF-76, USAID, UNAMA, PRT and other members of his administration, the Governor of Panjshir highlighted his interest to improve the situation of women in the province. He noted that residents of Panjshir enjoy isolation from the violence which accompanies terrorism and illicit drug production. Officials in Panjshir, he added, can therefore focus their attention on developing their province and improving the quality of life of their citizens. The Governor also voiced his frustration with the Panjshir Director of Women's Affairs, who he considers inept.

-----  
Working with the Governor. . .  
-----

¶3. (SBU) In meetings with the Governor, the PRT has noted our agreement with his assessment of the Director of Women's Affairs. We outlined our approach to exploit Panjshir opportunities by working around the Director of Women's Affairs while not undermining the office of the Directorate. This balancing act has been carried out in four meetings with the women of Panjshir. The USAID representative has worked with the Director to set up cultural-exchange meetings in four of the seven districts of Panjshir. All female PRT staff were invited to participate. Two of the meetings were organized with the support of the female Provincial Council

member representing those districts as a way to support other female officials of Panjshir. Through these four meetings the PRT has been able to speak directly with approximately 150 women, without the self-interested filter of the Director of Women's Affairs.

-----  
. . . and around the Director  
-----

¶4. (SBU) On November 26, with the PRT present, the Governor summoned the Director of Women's Affairs to his office to review her performance. He told her she had neglected her core responsibilities; wandered into other fields outside her purview, such as distributing school supplies and humanitarian assistance; engaged only feebly in advocacy for women; failed to plan for her Directorate; and represented the women of Panjshir in an unprofessional manner. The PRT agrees with the Governor's assessment. The Director has not fulfilled commitments she has made to the PRT. For example, she pledged several times -- and then reneged -- to take the PRT to see a women's bakery she claimed to be supporting. The PRT has not been able to verify that the bakery even exists. Further, our contacts have voiced suspicion that she willfully sabotaged a cultural-exchange meeting for her own political ends.

¶5. (U) The PRT is working around the weak director by dealing with other directors. The PRT has worked through two of the strongest directors, the Director of Education and the Director of Health, to improve service delivery to women. With the assistance of the Director of Education and drawing on CERP funds, the PRT has nearly completed construction of a sixteen room girls, high school in the provincial capital

KABUL 00005843 002 OF 002

district. The PRT is also helping, again with CERP support, to rehabilitate the teacher's training center, through which the Director of Education aims to increase the number of female school teachers.

¶6. (U) To cite additional examples, the Director of Education has assisted in coordinating English class for girls, to be taught by PRT staff during their free time. The Director of Health has been active in assisting the PRT in identifying clinics in need of mother and child health care equipment. In addition, the Director of Health has facilitated Medical Civil Affairs Programs (MEDCAPS) in some of the most remote regions of the Valley, in which the U.S. Military has provided female health care professionals to treat women who often have little or no access to health care

¶7. (SBU) The Governor often mentions the importance of including women in development initiatives. He has expressed his disappointment in "missed opportunities." He told the PRT he was considering replacing the Director to revitalize the portfolio.

¶8. (C) In a December 12 meeting with Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs Mazari Safa and Director of the Ministry's Provincial Relations Department Karima Solek, both officials commented to Poloff the Panjshir director for women's affairs is "not a very well educated woman," implying that this impedes her ability to work effectively with counterparts in local government. They also noted that the provincial government officials were not always as cooperative as they could be with the director. Solek said that they have removed directors from their positions in the past when internal investigations have shown that the directors were not fulfilling their mandate. The Deputy Minister told Poloff that she is personally committed to ensuring the Ministry has the best people possible working in the provinces.

-----

COMMENT

-----

¶9. (SBU) The Director of Women's Affairs for Panjshir is weak at best, and obstructionist at worst. The PRT assessment is that she is the weakest line director in Panjshir. At the same time, the portfolio is an important one, recognized by Governor Bahlul and, before him, the mujahideen leader Massoud. The opportunity is enhanced by a cultural openness to the advancement of women.

¶10. (U) The creativity required to extend the reach of the Afghan Government, while not supporting an ineffective or corrupt representative, is a main challenge of our work. This example in Panjshir is a case study in the work-around strategy. The PRT has been able to get information directly from the women of Panjshir through cultural exchanges. In addition, the PRT has been able to directly address some of their needs by working through other line ministers. The PRT will continue with this strategy in order to optimize the opportunities for women in the unique Panjshir setting. Embassy will continue to raise the importance of having competent and capable provincial directors of women's affairs with Ministry contacts on a regular basis. END COMMENT  
NEUMANN